



SAN PU KAI

March 2009

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President's Message

Sometimes when the meetings are just about working on our trees, we can sit back and relax and realize that getting our hands into the soil is what bonsai is all about. We enjoyed **Cary Sullivan-Valentine's** goodies very much, to give us that extra little bit of energy so that we could finish up our tree projects. **Steve Valentine** shared his trunk chopped Chinese elm that he originally demonstrated a few years back, which has now grown a gratifying set of branches around the chop. He talked about branch selection and pruning, and the tree is well on its way to stardom as a broom style bonsai. We also had a lively discussion about other trees that were presented.

In March, I'm going to bring the goodies, and you know that I like to put out a nice spread! So save a little room after dinner.

For our March presentation, esteemed mame artist Shirley Kavanaugh will be coming with her troop of tiny trees. Shirley will do a workshop, in which you can participate if you wish, or you can just sit back and watch. For \$20, you will receive a little kit with a nice little boxwood, pots, soil, a tool, and lots of teensy dandy items to make mame bonsai fun and easy. **If you want to bring your own tools and about half a cup of soil**, you can buy a kit that consists of just a tree and pot, with a more elaborate juniper. Either way, you will indulge your desires for the smallest of the small. Shirley has given this class numerous times before, and every tree that I have potted in her classes has lived and thrived. She will tell you how to keep them happy, and she is the undisputed Queen of Mame!

Marty has always written an informative, well thought out, and timely article for San Pu Kai. Let's take a moment to thank him for what he has done for the club all of these years! Having the benefit of so much knowledge is part of the reason that San Pu Kai continues to have some of the best bonsai exhibits around. Tiny but mighty! Speaking of which, we will be discussing show preparation and tips on displaying our trees, in April, so that we can really wow the public in May. Do you have any accent plants ready? A quick trip to a nursery on such a glorious day as we have been enjoying, would really get you in the mood to pot up a few accents for the show!

Our next meeting is March 10th at the Senior Center, see you there!

Joanie Berkwitz, President
760-431-1014



SAN PU KAI – BONSAI IDEAS

BY MARTY MANN
MARCH 2009 (#63)



Plan your repotting activity. Now is the time, before the trees awaken. Take this opportunity to change from training pots or oversized pots to appropriate display pots more suitable to the finished bonsai. Determine the size, shape, color and style to complement your tree. If you see an appropriate pot at a nursery or bazaar, buy it when you see it.

A bonsai, to be ready for repotting, should be somewhat dry. This facilitates removal from a tight pot. Unwind twisted roots that have circled the outer rim and free them of hardened or compacted soil. Usually, with deciduous or conifers, it's best to cut about 1/3 of the root ball away as the roots are freed. Trim to reduce the ball to fit into its new pot. Keep fine roots sprayed. Don't allow them to dry. Cut away heavy old roots.

When repotting, it's a good time to reposition the tree if it is required. Change the height, adjust the trunk angle, add more potting soil around the root ball, and work it in with your chopstick to fill in as many air pockets as possible. Remember to slope your surface slightly from the trunk to the lip of the pot. Leave an indentation along the rim of the pot to prevent water run-off. A good soaking removes destructive air pockets. Repotted material may be placed in semi-shade for a week or so. Don't water heavily. Introduce the tree back to full light and warmth to encourage root and bud growth to begin. Don't feed for 4 to 5 weeks. March can be a capricious month--ranging from cool to hot. Don't encourage too much quick growth since this creates unsightly long internodes and large leaves. Pay particular attention to fruiting and flowering trees. If they have been too active in directing their energy into flowers and buds then some pinching back can help them pay attention to leaves and woody branching.

Repotting activity should be regulated. Know when and what has been done to each tree. Plan your activity around a review of this generalized schedule of repotting as follows:

Young trees, less than 5 years old--repot every 1-2-3 years, depending upon growth and needs. Be sure you have strong root development before you repot young trees.

Somewhat older trees, 5 to 20 years old--repot every 2-3-4 years. Check the root ball for good health.

Very old trees, 20 or more years --repot every 4-5-6 years, depending upon the condition of the tree. Review specie habits. Some like to be crowded and may not need to be repotted.

Fertilization programs can resume. Don't feed newly potted material too soon. Fast growth causes long internodes and large leaves. Keep nitrogen content low for the first month or so as the plant comes out of dormancy. If the new growth is too active, keep it pinched. Whenever a new set of leaves appears, pinch back on the center set. If your objective is to improve twiggyiness on elms, zelkovas, maples, etc. cut new internodes to two sets of leaves. Pinch new evergreen growth to encourage density. Don't pinch fruiting or flowering trees such as bougainvilleas, pomegranates, ume, crabapples, quince or azaleas. Early spring pinching removes the forming flower and fruit buds.

Insects come back to life with the arrival of steady warmth. Start with Malathion to attack most predators but don't overlook Seven or Isotox if signs of chewing damage show on your leaves. Spray well into the interior of the tree and onto the undersides of the leaves. Sucking insects such as scale, aphids, white flies, mealy bugs and mites require a systemic action in the pesticide you use. Watch for fungus. Use Benomyl to kill mildew. Spray on warm, dry days. Mid-morning is best to allow the spray material to dry onto the plant surfaces. Avoid watering until the sprays can be effective.

BONSAI PAVILIONS AT THE WAP

Due to very heavy rains on some recent Saturdays, work was curtailed at the WAP. Fortunately, the sun always returns and we are again catering to our bonsai at the WAP. Thanks always to **Sally Bencangey, Joanie Berkwitz, Maria Barbosa, John Jackson, Jim Kirchmer, Ray Lish, Marty Mann, Harlan & Mary Ann Price, 'lyn Stevenson, Cary & Steve Valentine, Forrest & Michelle Vess, John Voss, and Dave Woodall.** Their diligence and careful help is always appreciated! Thanks for refreshments from **Cary and 'lyn. A special welcome to Sally, Forrest and Michelle from San Pu Kai who joined the volunteers in February.**

Beginning this past month, the Wild Animal Park under the direction of Horticulturist Cary Sharp, his assistant, Mark Huston, and the staff at the WAP, installed a main drain sewer behind our new Pavilion construction site with the drain going completely under the Pavilion to the front end. We will be able to tap into it in different places in the Pavilion later for smaller drainage areas as needed. This has been a priority concern for some time and it is great to have it resolved so very well. Rains are rare but when they do come, there was/is always a concern for flooding and wash outs. This will alleviate much of that concern.

The WAP recently hosted a lovely Volunteer Appreciation Potluck Luncheon and program for the various garden volunteers at the WAP and our Bonsai contingent was well represented. It was also an opportunity for us to share with the staff and volunteers a bit of what is happening with our pavilion project. Thanks to John Jackson, Gary & Karla Kelly Jones, Jim and Susan Kirchmer, Ray and Linda Lish and their family, **'lyn Stevenson, Cary & Steve Valentine, John Voss, and Dave Woodall** for participating and also being lucky winners in the WAP's generous raffle.

At the March SDBC meeting, we will be asking for volunteers for the **WAP's Garden Societies Celebration 2009.** We will again have display tables (and chairs!) with some bonsai from the Pavilion along with general information about SDBC, bonsai grooming and growing, etc. We will need volunteers on shifts for Saturday, April 4th and Sunday April 5th from 9 to 4 to answer questions and visit with WAP guests. If you can help during any of that time, even if you are not a regular volunteer in the Pavilions, it will be most appreciated.

Volunteers will continue to receive e-mails on a weekly basis to alert them to special projects needing help at the Pavilions but our normal workday will continue to be on the third Saturday of each month. If we do not have your correct e-mail address please let **'lyn** know.

'lyn Stevenson
SDBC-WAP Liaison
858-486-4805
e-mail: inthegrove@Cox.net

On May 3rd, SDBC will be meeting at the Wild Animal Park for their Picnic and Auction that benefits the Pavilion. If you are not a SDBC member but you would like to attend, please contact Joanie and you can come and participate. See how the Pavilion is progressing, have fun at the auction and bring your own picnic basket. It's free, but you have to be on the list. We encourage everyone to come up to the WAP on the workdays and enjoy the friendship and good fun. The weather is perfect to be working among the lovely bonsai, and then strolling the park.



SAN PU KAI

c/o Joanie Berkwitz
5440 El Arbol Drive
Carlsbad, CA 92008

Our Spring Show will be held in the Carlsbad Flower Fields, on May 9th and 10th, 2009

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, March 10 th , 2009	7 pm to 9 pm	Regular meeting, Carlsbad Senior Center, 799 Pine Ave
Saturday, March 21 st , 2009	9 am – 12 pm	Workday, Bonsai Pavilions Wild Animal Park
Tuesday, April 14 th , 2009	7 pm to 9 pm	Regular meeting, Carlsbad Senior Center, 799 Pine Ave
Saturday, April 18 th , 2009	9 am – 12 pm	Workday, Bonsai Pavilions Wild Animal Park